AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

1. (cancelled)

2. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 wherein said liner is made from a material having a melting point greater than about 265□F and a shore A hardness value of about 70.

3. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 2 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

4. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.

5. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 26 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.

6. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 5 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging the collar.

7. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 6 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

8. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 6 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

9. (currently amended): The closure and container of claim 26 wherein said ~~cap~~ closure includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein said liner is made from a thermoplastic material.

12. (previously presented):: The closure and container of claim 27 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

13. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein the angle Θ is less than about 20□.

14. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 13 wherein the angle Θ is about 20□.

15. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 13 wherein the angle Θ is less than about 10□

16. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.

17. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 27 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.

18. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 17 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging the collar.

19. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 18 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

20. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 18 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

21. (currently amended): The closure and container of claim 27 wherein said ~~cap~~ closure includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.

22. (cancelled)

23. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

24. (original): A method for maintaining pressure against a seal affixed to a container lip as a sealed container is exposed to relatively high temperature and pressure conditions, said method comprising reversibly affixing a closure to said container such that a liner of said closure abuts a surface of said seal so as to sandwich said seal between said liner and said container lip, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive

pressure against said seal upon exposure to elevated temperatures, elevated pressure, or a combination of elevated temperature and elevated pressure.

25. (original): The method of claim 24 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

26. (currently amended): A closure in combination with a container comprising:

a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a seal covering said opening;

b. a ~~cap~~ closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface, and having at least one thread affixed to the interior skirt surface in a spiral and engagable with a mating thread on an exterior surface of said neck; and,

c. A liner, proportioned to fit firmly within said ~~cap~~ closure and abutting the top interior surface thereof, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said ~~cap~~ closure and against said seal when said closure is affixed to said container.

27. (currently amended): A closure in combination with a container comprising:

a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a seal covering said opening;

b. a ~~cap~~ closure having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface,

c. at least one thread affixed to the skirt interior surface and circumscribing the skirt in a spiral such that a thread receiving groove is formed, said thread having an upper edge wherein an angle Θ is defined between the upper edge and a horizontal plane, and the angle Θ is less than about 45°.

d. A liner, proportioned to fit firmly within said ~~cap~~ closure and abutting the top interior surface thereof, said liner defining a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, and said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness sufficient to allow said liner to maintain a positive pressure against said ~~cap~~ closure and against said seal when said closure is affixed to said container.

28. (currently amended): A closure in combination with a container comprising:

a. a container having a neck with a lip defining an opening therein, and a seal covering said opening;

b. a ~~cap~~ closure, having a top with an interior surface and a skirt depending from the top and defining a skirt interior surface, and having at

least one thread affixed to the interior skirt surface in a spiral and engagable with a mating thread on an exterior surface of said neck; and

c. a liner, having a resting thickness at ambient temperature and pressure conditions, said liner being made from a material capable of being compressed to a thickness less than the resting thickness and being capable of recovering to a recovery thickness in a sealing zone such that said seal is sandwiched between said liner and said container lip at a pressure sufficient to retain said seal against said lip when said sealed container is subject to retort processing conditions.

29. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 wherein said liner is made from a material having a melting point greater than about 265□F and a shore A hardness value of about 70.

30. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 29 wherein said liner is made from a material selected from the group consisting of a silicone-based material, urethane, latex, rubber, thermoplastic elastomers, thermoset elastomers or a combination thereof.

31. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 further comprising at least one layer of bonding material between said liner and said top interior surface.

32. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 28 further comprising an essentially circular tamper-evident band depending from the skirt.

33. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 32 wherein said tamper-evident band includes a break-away section and a means for positively engaging the collar.

34. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 33 wherein said collar-engaging means are flexible finger projections.

35. (previously presented): The closure and container of claim 33 wherein said collar-engaging means is a continuous bead secured to said skirt interior surface.

36. (currently amended): The closure and container of claim 28 wherein said ~~cap~~ closure includes at least one slit extending a predetermined length from the top to the skirt.